POSITION PAPER: Glucometers

DATE: Approved by the Governor's Advisory Board May 5, 2000

Definitions:

Glucometer: A portable device for determining the blood glucose level from a drop of blood obtained from a finger puncture.

Background:

Blood glucose determination utilizing portable glucometers is a common skill, and very helpful in assessing a patient with an altered mental status. This diagnostic tool allows the determination of potentially critical or clinically significant hypoglycemia. Identification of hypoglycemia will require further intervention (oral glucose/ intravenous access/ IM glucagon) to correct this condition. The finger puncture and glucometry is minimally invasive. The risk of performing glucometry is minimal involving slight bleeding and a small risk of infection. Drawbacks may include increased field time to perform the skill, however, the potential for a corrective intervention outweigh this issue. The devices do malfunction and require specific training for use as each device and manufacturer are different. The use of this device should be left to the discretion of the OMD.

1. The agency shall have the appropriate CLIA waiver to perform this test. Federal law requires that any agency that performs laboratory type tests comply with certain laboratory regulations or have an appropriate waiver.
2. The OMD for the agency shall be familiar with the procedure and willing to provide oversight. In general, ALS training programs provide training in this skill. However, since there are many different devices available, each agency will have to provide training on the particular machine they are utilizing.
3. There must be a written protocol.
4. There must be a protocol to identify interventions that should occur based on the reading obtained. Obtaining readings from this device are not a requirement to initiate treatment.

5. There shall be a defined program of initial and continuing education in the technique.
6. The agency must provide resources for training and continuing education.
7. There shall be quality assurance monitoring, and a device quality assurance monitoring program which follows the manufacturers recommendations. This should include at minimum; review of problem cases, and adherence to protocol.